

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

★ news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

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INTERIOR WILDLIFE AGENTS APPREHEND 77 INDIVIDUALS IN 11 STATES

Federal Game Management Agents, assisted by State conservation officers and United States Marshals, moved in at daybreak this morning to arrest or summon 77 persons in 11 States on charges of selling migratory game birds in violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall announced.

The charges, which consist of 245 counts of violating the migratory bird regulations, were based on evidence gathered over a 2½-year period by a team of undercover agents from the Fish and Wildlife Service's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. During the investigations, the agents made 141 waterfowl "buys," each involving from 2 to 110 birds. In addition, numerous deer, quail and other types of resident game were purchased.

In announcing the early morning operation, Secretary Udall said the Bureau has stepped up its undercover work because "killing and selling game for profit is a vicious form of game law violation and particularly damaging to wildlife resources."

"The Bureau now has several undercover investigators working in various parts of the country and this type of enforcement work is expected to continue," Secretary Udall said.

Although there is apparently no "ring," or connection, among the cases in the various States, simultaneous raids were conducted to prevent any possible advance warning. The States involved include: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, and Virginia. In many cases, State personnel supplied the leads that "tipped off" the Federal agents. The charges were processed by United States Attorneys in the various States.

Market hunting and selling of migratory birds were outlawed in 1918 by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act with Great Britain (Canada). They were considered a misdemeanor or minor offense by the courts until 1960 when they became a felony.

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